

SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE NEWS FOR SUNDAY 15 DECEMBER 2019

Good morning and welcome to the weekly news bulletin of the South African Radio League read by [your name, call sign and QTH]

The South African Radio League broadcasts a news bulletin each Sunday in Afrikaans as well as in English at 08:15 and 08:30 Central African Time respectively on HF and on various VHF and UHF repeaters around the country. The bulletin is relayed on Echolink by Johan, ZS6JPL. A podcast is available on the League website. Audio and text bulletins may be downloaded from the League website at www.sarl.org.za where you can also sign up to receive future bulletins by e-mail.

In the news, today:

MAJOR QRM ON 40 METRES

THE BETHLEHEM 2 M BEACON IS ON THE AIR

and

THE SARL REPRESENTS THE IARU AT THE ATU WORKSHOP ON EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

Stay tuned for more information on these and other interesting news items.

THE OFFICE AT THE NARC CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS

The Office at the National Amateur Radio Centre will close on Friday 20 December for the Christmas holidays. The Office will open again on Monday 6 January 2020.

MAJOR QRM ON 40 METRES

European and South American radio amateurs have reported major interference from Russian OTH Radar stations (Over-the-Horizon Radar stations). Interference has been reported on 7 064, 7 109, 7 170 and 7 190 kHz. All signals are 12 kHz wide. Several European Societies have already sent complaints to the Regulator in their country. The SARL needs reports from South African radio amateurs before the SARL can report the intruders in the amateur bands to ICASA for appropriate action.

The interference is problematic as in the ITU Convention Chapter VII Special Provisions for Radio; Article 48, states "...Installations for National Defence Services: Member States retain their entire freedom with regard to military radio installations!"

It is however important for as many amateur radio associations as possible to send complaints to their local regulator. Please monitor 7 064, 7 109 , 7 170 and 7 190 kHz and send your observations i.e. date, time, frequency and signal strength (S meter reading) to artoday@sarl.org.za. Help us to protect our frequencies.

THE BETHLEHEM 2 M BEACON IS ON THE AIR

The Bethlehem 2 m beacon that has previously been reported on, is now on the air. A dedicated group of VHF enthusiasts installed the two 8 element Yagi antennas, splitter and LMR400 coax on the mast of the Free State Amateur Radio Club in Bethlehem on Saturday 7 December 2019. After connecting the cable in the repeater hut, the beacon in its box was powered up and within 30 seconds the first message was sent towards Johannesburg and Durban. Not long after that the reports started coming in, S3 to S5 in Pretoria and 3/1 in Edenvale. It is heard softly in Kimberley and Bloemfontein, which are on the back of the antennas.

The beacon transmits on 144,425 MHz CW with 25 W into a pair of 8 element Yagi antennas. The message being transmitted to those who cannot read CW is “CQ CQ ZS0BET ZS0BET BEACON KG41DS.”

Well done to the team of Rickus, ZS4A; Charl, ZS4ATZ; Wallie, ZS4LD; Daniel, ZS4DA; Stephan, ZS4SDL and Carl, ZS6CBQ, who installed the beacon in Bethlehem. Listen to Amateur Radio Today for more information about the installation of the beacon. The VHF Work Group will now focus on a 2 m beacon for the Northern Karoo in the new year.

THE 2020 SARL BLUE BOOK AND DIARY OF EVENTS

The 2020 SARL Contest Manual or Blue Book and the 2020 Diary of Events are available for download from the Contest and Diary of Events link respectively on the left side of the League website. There are new contests added for 2020 and rules of certain contests have been changed. Contest sponsors are once again asked to check that the details of your specific contest are correct. There is also an A3 size Year-at-a-Glance calendar available.

You are listening to a news bulletin of the South African Radio League.

THE SARL REPRESENTS THE IARU AT THE ATU WORKSHOP ON EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

At WRC-19, the African Telecommunications Union (ATU) requested assistance from the IARU to provide a speaker for the African Telecoms/ICT Day 2019 Commemorative Workshop in Maputo, Mozambique from 5 to 7 December 2019. The theme of the workshop was “Using Technology to Save Lives: Emergency Communications for Disaster Risk Reductions and Management.” The aim of the workshop was to identify ways technology can be used to mitigate future disasters like Cyclone Idai and Kenneth that struck Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi earlier in the year. Some of these countries were without communications on any sort for up to 10 days, which is a major catastrophe.

Brian Jacobs, ZS6YZ and Leon Lessing, ZS6LMG presented two presentations at the Workshop. These presentations were prepared under the leadership of Don Beattie, G3BJ the IARU Region 1 President and Hans Welens, ON6WQ, the Region 1 STARS Working Group Chairman. Brian, ZS6YZ presented the

first presentation which discussed what amateur radio is, and the role and value of amateur radio in an emergency where all other communications systems have failed. This presentation was so well received, that the Mozambiquan Regulator overnight initiated contact with the non-functioning Mozambique Amateur Radio League (LREM). They will now assist LREM in becoming an active organisation again, to be in a position to assist the Republic of Mozambique with emergency communications.

Leon, ZS6LMG introduced the IARU Support to the Amateur Radio Service (STARS) programme to assist the ATU Member States in re-initiating amateur radio or establishing amateur radio within their respective countries. Again, this was very well received and after this presentation the Ugandan delegation requested information about their member society so that they could contact them and ensure that amateur radio takes its rightful place in the Ugandan emergency communications plans. The Sierra Leone Member of Parliament leading the delegation also requested information about their amateur radio society as they saw the value that amateur radio offers the country in times of emergency.

The workshop resulted in a strategy document with definite goals, outcomes and timelines for the ATU and Member States to develop cooperative and harmonised communications solutions encompassing all forms of telecommunications across all the African Regions. The contribution from the IARU, SARL and SARL Hamnet team was very well received and gave the ATU Member States a new positive perspective on amateur radio and their role in emergency communications and information and communications technologies (ICT).

THE 30 METRE PROPAGATION STUDY

The IARU Region One 30 MHz bandplan allows a segment for SSB from 10 120 to 10 140 kHz, during daylight hours in areas south of the equator while no bulletins are allowed. With the propagation conditions prevalent to the 30 Metre band, it would be of interest in Southern Africa to allow SARL NEWS and Amateur Radio Today to be transmitted on 10 MHz. The SARL IARU workgroup has initiated a propagation study with Ean Retief, ZS1PR. All Radio Amateurs who use the 10 MHz band are invited to share their views and experience. Send an e-mail to artoday@sarl.org.za.

PROPAGATION REPORT

Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that the solar activity is expected to remain at low levels. There are currently no sunspots visible. If you want to do your own frequency predictions, the expected effective sunspot number for the week will be around one. The 15 to 30 m bands may provide some good DX fun. Please visit the website spaceweather.sansa.org.za for further information.

Finally, a diary of some upcoming events:

Until midnight UTC tonight - the ARRL 10 m contest 16 December - Reconciliation Day 22 December - Summer Solstice 23 December - the Ursids meteor

shower 25 December - Christmas Day 26 December - Family Day 31 December
- the end of the 2019 CQ DX Marathon and the YOTA month 1 January New
Year's Day, the start of the 2020 CQ DX Marathon and the Southern African
Parks-on-the-Air programme and download the 2020 Blue Book 4 January the
ARRL Kids Day 4 and 5 January the ARRL RTTY Roundup

To conclude our bulletin, a quick overview of our main news item:

European and South American radio amateurs have reported major interference from Russian OTH Radar stations (Over the Horizon Radar stations). Interference has been reported on 7 064, 7 109, 7 170, 7 190 kHz. All signals are 12 kHz wide. Several European Societies have already sent complaints to the regulator in their country. The SARL needs report from South African radio amateurs before the SARL can report the intruders in the amateur bands to ICASA for appropriate action.

This concludes our bulletin for this morning.

We invite clubs and individuals to submit news items of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners, in both English and Afrikaans if possible, by following the news inbox link on the South African Radio League web page. News items to include in the bulletin should reach the news team no later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

You are welcome to join us every Sunday morning for the weekly amateur radio program, Amateur Radio Today at 10:00 Central African Time. The program can be heard on VHF and UHF repeaters countrywide and on 7 082 kHz lower side-band. A rebroadcast by Andy, ZS6ADY can be heard on Monday evenings at 19:30 Central African Time on 3 620 kHz. We welcome your signal reports, comments and suggestions; please send these by e-mail to artoday@sarl.org.za.

You have listened to a news bulletin compiled by Dennis Green, ZS4BS, edited by Dave Reece, ZS1DFR and read by

From the news team, best wishes for the week ahead.